SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) estimates that more than 2.7 million people are affected by extreme El Niño climate conditions, which started around April 2015 and are expected to extend until mid-2016. As of January 2016, the needs of an estimated 770,000 people living in rural and high-altitude locations in PNG continued to be exacerbated by severe drought and localised frost (Bourke, 2016).

Priority areas for the response efforts have been identified as inland Morehead and Nomad Rural Local Level Governments (LLGs), Western Province; inland Gulf Province; southwest Southern Highlands Province; Gumine, Salt and Nomane LLGs, south Simbu Province; very high altitude locations in Enga, Hela, Southern Highlands and Western Highlands provinces and small islands in Milne Bay Province (Bourke, 2016).

Logistical access to these areas is particularly challenging. There is a limited road network permitting access through the central highlands, but recent rains have caused flooding of small access roads and reportedly damaged a number of small bridges. In the Western province and Sepik province, there are very few roads and the vast majority of villages are only accessible by river or by air.

1. OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- Facilitated by the World Food Programme (WFP), the Digicel Foundation has provided funding for the transportation of 164 mt of rice, procured by the Ok Tedi Development Foundation (OTDF), to parts of Nomad Rural Local Level Government (LLG), in the Middle Fly District, Western Province (WP).

- The governments of Australia and New Zealand have provided funding for the transportation of 20 containers of rice, also procured by OTDF, to areas in the Middle and South Fly districts (WP).

- CARE informs that, as of 25 February, it has carried out WASH NFI (water jerry cans, soap and aquatabs) distributions to the Simbu, Morobe and Eastern Highland Provinces for a total of 7,061 households. The organisation advises that further NFI distributions will be carried out in March, for a final total household count of 17,000.

- CARE informs that its distribution of a total of 228,000 cans of tinned fish to the Simbu and Western Highlands Provinces is ongoing.

- World Vision International (WVI) informs that it has completed the distribution of 20-litre jerry cans and aquatabs to 865 households in Markham District, Morobe Province, and that distributions are ongoing in Madang Province for a total of 940 households.

- Oxfam informs that, as of 08 Mar 2016, 29,400 beneficiaries in Simbu and Eastern Highlands Provinces have been reached with NFIs distributions.

- Oxfam advises that NFIs for distribution in East Sepik are being transported by ship from Lae to Wewak, and that planning is underway to arrange boat transport of WASH materials to support the response in the Schouten Islands.

- Church Partnership Programme (CPP) teams are currently planning travel and mobilising logistics ahead of their needs assessments exercise due to start on 21 Mar 2016 into very high altitude areas in Enga, Southern Highlands and Hela Provinces.
2. ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

Jiwaka Province

- As per The National on 14 Mar 2016, Waghi river flooding has caused damage to Waghi Bridge in Kondopina Waghi, at the border of Kiwaka and Southern Highlands Province. The bridge foundations have reportedly been almost washed away, and the bridge is reportedly close to collapse.
- Local media reports also indicate there is reduced traffic near the village of Kaip, at the border with the Western Highlands Province, after the Lal River burst its banks.

Oro Province

- According to local media there is significant damage to river crossings on the Girua and Kumusi rivers, at Haijo Bridge and Siao culvert, due to floodwaters.

Eastern Highlands Province

- Highlands Highway cut off after the collapse of a culvert at Avani in the Kompri Valley. The bypass at the Bena Bridge is only open to light vehicles, and the Yonki Kol Wara section of the highway remains closed.
- Oxfam informs that flooding and landslides on the Highlands Highways have resulted in delays in the movement of materials to and from Goroka to project sites. The situation, however, is improving as temporary repairs are being made to bridges and roads.

Madang Province

- Local media and WVI inform that traffic is restricted, and parts of the road have collapsed, near the Usino-Bundi junction on the Madang-Lae road.

Air

- As of 15 March, the Rural Airstrips Agency (RAA) reports that all of its 23 monitored rural airstrips were open to air traffic. These include airstrips in remote locations such as Hesalibi, Fuma and Mougulu (Western Province); Amblua, Kol and Koinambe (Jiwaka Province); and Lapolama, Iropeno and Maramuni (Enga Province).
- RAA produces a daily rural airstrip condition report – iRAMP - co-funded by the PNG Government. Organisations interested in receiving this report, should contact the WFP Logistics Information Management Officer.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (A.O.B.)

- An El Nino-dedicated webpage is now available on the Logistics Cluster website at: http://www.logcluster.org/ops/elnino16

- Organisations are kindly reminded to continue to inform the WFP Logistics Information Management Officer of access constraints. These will be consolidated and shared via distribution lists and on the Logistics Cluster website.

- The next Logistics Bulletin will be published on 28 March. Organisations are requested to send their logistics information via email to the WFP Logistics Information Management Officer by 27 March.

- A new WFP Programme Officer (Operations), Cameron Higgins, has been deployed to Port Moresby. He can be reached at: cameron.higgins@wfp.org

- CPP informs that a new Information Management and Training advisor, Brendan Jinks, who will be involved in logistics planning and coordination between CPP and its partners, has joined its teams for the next three months. He can be reached at: brendan.jinks@anu.edu.au

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